

CG-17-98

VISITATION

Every week we host dozens of visitors at White Sands Missile Range. I want to address two concerns about our guests. The first is safety. Safety of all visitors and Range personnel is our number one priority. It is essential that we aggressively comply with all safety guidance and rules for protecting ourselves and our guests. Accordingly, every visitor traveling anywhere on the Range outside of the main post must receive an appropriate safety briefing and sign a waiver of liability. This applies to everyone from everyday tourists to Congressmen. In addition, the approval for using Army Air assets for any visitor now rests with me personally.

My second concern centers on the propriety or "appearance" of some visits to our Range. Although I am the leading advocate for a strong community relations program at White Sands, I also want everyone to be sensitive to the issue of whether a particular visit is proper or not. In a few cases, I have been concerned about visits or tours supported by Range personnel that result in little benefit to White Sands but primarily provide personal gain to the individual requesting the tour. I want all of us to remain sensitive to the requirement that all visits involving the use of Range assets and personnel must reflect the highest ethical standards and avoid any appearance of impropriety.

In this day and age where we are all accountable to taxpayers for every dollar spent here at White Sands, I see a need to balance the costs associated with our Range-supported visits against dwindling resources. In the future, I want organizations to review the expense of each visit or tour against the anticipated business-related return and intangible benefits to ensure that our involvement results in a wise use of precious assets.

Although I encourage everyone to promote the tremendous resources here at America's Range, we must always ensure that our actions reflect the highest standards of safety and conduct.

I realize most of our visitors and tours are hosted safely and are very appropriate for the Range. I do, however, expect every director or office chief to review requests coming through their organization for safety and appropriateness. Should you have any questions regarding this guidance, contact our Public Affairs Office. For those visits which Public

Affairs cannot make a final determination, the request will be forwarded to the Garrison Commander for review.

HARRY D. GATANAS
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:
D, F